

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

March 7, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in reply to your letter of last month inquiring generally about the practice this Administration will follow in invoking the doctrine of executive privilege in withholding certain information from the Congress.

As your letter indicated, my letter of February 8 to Secretary McNamara made it perfectly clear that the directive to refuse to make certain specific information available to a special subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee was limited to that specific request and that "each case must be judged on its merits".

As you know, this Administration has gone to great lengths to achieve full cooperation with the Congress in making available to it all appropriate documents, correspondence and information. That is the basic policy of this Administration, and it will continue to be so. Executive privilege can be invoked only by the President and will not be used without specific Presidential approval. Your own interest in assuring the widest public accessibility to governmental information is, of course, well known, and I can assure you this Administration will continue to cooperate with your subcommittee and the entire Congress in achieving this objective.

Sincerely,

/s/ John F. Kennedy

Honorable John E. Moss
Chairman
Special Government Information
Subcommittee of the Committee
on Government Operations
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SPECIAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE

March 16, 1962

NOTE TO COUNSELS:

The most recent presidential statement on the question of "executive privilege" is a letter from President John F. Kennedy to Congressman John E. Moss, Chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Government Information.

President Kennedy's letter of March 7, 1962 to Congressman Moss clarifies his earlier letter to Secretary McNamara directing him to refuse certain information to a Senate subcommittee. Because there have been a number of requests for the President's letter, copies of the correspondence between the President and Congressman Moss are enclosed.

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